equipments, supply of sprinkler sets, farmers' training and contingency for monitoring etc.

(c) The Cotton Advisory Board (CAB) which assesses the requirement of cotton for textile and non-textile consumption in the country makes such assessment for total requirement of cotton and not staple group-wise separately.

(d) and (e) As per estimates of CAB, production of long and extra long staple cotton during the years 1996-97 and 1997-98 is as under:

(In lakh bales)

Staple group	1996-97	1997-98
Long	68.45	71.00
Extra long	5.66	4.50

The CAB which assesses the demand-supply of cotton in the country has provisionally assessed the requirement of import of cotton as 2 lakh bales during 1998-99 season.

The import of cotton is currently under OGL with zero import duty, Hence, there is no restriction on import cotton and the textile mills are at liberty to import cotton of any staple variety/quantity and from any country of their choice.

Fishing Harbours in Orissa

2041. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the places of Orissa where fishing harbours are being constructed at present;

(b) whether the proposals for the establishment of some fishing harbours in that State are pending with Government;

(c) if so, what are those pending proposals; and

(d) the details of the steps taken by Government to give those proposals administrative approvals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) The Dhamra Stage-II minor fishing harbour in Bhadrak district is under construction in Orissa.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Does not arise.

Assistance to Assam Agricultural University

2042. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) how much assistance have been given to the Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat by the ICAR in last three years; and

(b) whether Government have any proposal to fund the university for research work in the coming years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Over Rs. 10.34 crores have been given to Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in the last three years.

(b) The Council will continue to fund Assam Agricultural University through All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP), Adhoc Schemes and Revolving fund schemes in future also. Two adhoc schemes for funding through the A.P. Cess Fund of ICAR for Fishery College of Assam Agricultural University are in pipeline. A Seed Technology Research Centre and AICRP on under-utilised crops have also been proposed during IXth Plan. In addition, Catch-up Grant for upgradation and modernisation of infrastructure and laboratory facilities has also been proposed during IXth Plan.

Vegetables Production in Kerala

2043. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Kerala Government has submitted a project for increasing vegetable production to attain self-sufficiency in the State seeking financial assistance for the same; and

(b) if so, the details of the project and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government of Kerala submitted a project proposal for increasing vegetable production to attain self-sufficiency in the State. On the

suggestion of Government of India the State Government of Kerala has submitted the revised proposal to National Horticulture Board to avail the assistance for setting up of cold storages and post harvest management facilities at the cost of Rs. 368.50 lakhs. National Horticulture Board has examined the proposal and sought some clarifications from State Government. The final reply from the State Government is awaited.

Coconut Farming System

2044. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Kerala Government has submitted a project for development of coconut farming system in Kerala seeking financial assistance for implementation of the same; and

(b) if so, the details of the project and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The Government of Kerala has submitted a Project for Development of Coconut Farming in Kerala, which envisages to increase production and productivity of the crop through replanting the diseased, senile, old and unproductive palms and better management in existing palms. Most of the measures suggested in the project are already being supported under various programmes of the Coconut Development Board. During 1997-98, out of a total allocation of Rs. 19.75 crores for various coconut development programmes, the Board released Rs. 10.28 crores to the State of Kerala. For the year 1998-99, an allocation of Rs. 10.41 crores has been made for Kerala.

Help to Cotton Growing Farmers

2045. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for declining prices of cotton; and

(b) the steps propose to help cotton growing farmers in their districts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The prices of cotton which had declined recently due to peak harvest season have started increasing as in evident from the Wholesale Price indices given below:-

August	377.1
September	370.4
October	361.9
November	367.3

The prices are currently ruling much above the *minimum support levels.*

The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) as nodal agency of the Government makes purchases for price support as and when the market prices touch the minimum support prices. The CCI also makes purchases under commercial operations as well as for export purposes.

Cotton Production

2046. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cotton crop for 1997-98 was 11.4 million bales against 14.3 million bales for 1996-97 as a result of which, cotton had to be imported for domestic use; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to improve indigenous production to meet the growing demand in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) According to the official estimates, the production of cotton during 1997-98 is estimated to be 11.2 million bales as against 14.3 million bales in 1996-97. During 1997-98, due to lower cotton production particularly of long and extra long staple varieties and also in view of the prevailing lower international prices of cotton *vis-a-vis* domestic prices. the textile mills had reported to import of 4 lakh bales of cotton.

(b) With a view to increasing production and productivity a centrally sponsored scheme namely, Intensive Cotton Development Programme is being implemented in 11 major cotton growing States. Under the scheme assistance is provided for production of breeder seeds; distribution of certified seeds;